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SUBJECT: UNDSS BRIEFS ON SECURITY SITUATION IN NORTH DARFUR

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Coordinator continues to assess the current situation in North Darfur as volatile and unpredictable. Fighting in the north has fallen off; however, the UNDSS Coordinator believes this is due to militia consolidation and preparations to regain lost territory. He expressed concern over the building trend of attacks on NGOs and other international organizations specifically detailing recent vehicle hijackings and compound attacks. END SUMMARY.

NRF/G-19 ATTACKS ON SLM/A-MINAWI JULY 14-18

2. (SBU) UNDSS Coordinator provided an overview of security incidents in North Darfur over the past week, reviewing the National Redemption Front (NRF) attacks on SLM/A-Minawi forces in Al Khosh on July 13, followed by Chadian-supported NRF attacks in Muzbat, Lil, Turba, and Gurbura on July 14-15. The Chadian forces were reported to have withdrawn across the border by late July 18, with the exception of a small group left in Shegeg Karo. UNDSS also stated that there were reports of Chadian Army helicopters extracting their wounded soldiers in Shegeg Karo on July 17. Overall control of the region is unclear, with both NRF (G-19) and SLM/A-M commanders claiming local control. UNDSS further stated that there was an apparent effort ongoing to find and attack SLM/A leader Minni Minawi and other SLM/A-M leaders' families in that area. Minawi later confirmed that he was worried about these families and was obliged to move forces into the area to protect them. UNDSS provided sketchy information on Arab and SLM/A-Wahid fighting near Funung and intra-SLM/A-Minawi fighting at Kulkul.

3. (SBU) UNDSS confirmed that SLA-Minawi controls Korma and the corridor to Tawila. He estimated that SLM/A leader Abdel Wahid is currently regrouping his forces and gauging his support after defections to G-19. Wahid continues to decline affiliation with the NRF. He predicted that the NRF will soon be attacked by SLA-Minawi.

REPORTS OF CHADIAN INVOLVMENT CONTINUE

4. (SBU) While UNDSS did not have hard proof on Chadian regular army participation the credible evidence continues to build. He observed that the NRF appeared freshly re-supplied, including new weapons (AK-47), vehicles and provisions. In a sidebar, UNDSS confided that during his discussions in Birmaza with G-19 leaders, he observed two individuals in Chadian uniforms, but could not confirm their status or roles (deserters or active duty). Several sources had reported Chadian helicopter sightings. (NOTE: UNDSS also noted NRF's preference to forego past affiliations such as JEM and G-19, though members of the NRF would retain their ties to original factions. He explained that NRF personnel told him that the rebel group considers SLA-Minawi, SAF, and AMIS all to be legitimate targets for attack.

The G-19 commanders also admitted that they had participated in the attack on Hamrat al Sheik in Kordafan. END NOTE.)

SPATE OF NGO VEHICLE HIJACKINGS

15. (SBU) UNDSS also highlighted a series of recent incidents involving international NGO organizations. Five vehicle hijackings had taken place in North Darfur and in the northern reaches of South Darfur in the last six days. He detailed three new vehicle hijackings in Saraf Omra, Shangil Tobaiya, and Duma, South Darfur between Nyala and El Fasher, as well as an incident in Kabkabiya involving the loss of one local national worker. Meanwhile two PAE drivers captured in conjunction with the stolen, AMIS-escorted fuel truck have been in contact with PAE and would likely be released within the next five days. Separately, a bus north of Duma came under small arms fire by unidentified assailants, with five wounded civilians seeking help at an NGO compound in Shangil Tobaiya. They were later transported to the hospital in El Fasher. Finally, UNDSS noted that SAF CPT Omar (NFI) was blocking the movement of UNMIS personnel in Kebkabiya and harassing them for paperwork/travel documents, most likely as a result of a misunderstanding their mission to destroy outdated food stuffs.

16. (SBU) UNDSS expects that thefts of vehicles, rebel "land-grabs," and some Arab militia attacks, while declining in severity and frequency from prior months, will continue. He reiterated that there was an active ongoing propaganda campaign, particularly by the non-signatory rebel groups. He predicted that general tensions are likely to increase, perhaps exacerbated by the northward migration of nomads in search of grazing/watering areas, and concluded that the situation will remain predictably unpredictable.

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